

## 6.0 Purpose

The Town of Excelsior supports and utilizes an effective array of utilities (such as phone and Internet service) and public facilities including parks, churches and an elementary school located in the Village of Rock Springs and Village of North Freedom. The Town also supports and utilizes services provided by both the County and School District. In addition to utilities and services, Excelsior has many historic attributes. These attributes provide insight into the Town's past and serve to ground the community as it builds upon its future. This section of the Plan summarizes the Town's utilities, public facilities and significant community cultural and historical resources.

## 6.1 Water Supply and Private On-site Waste Disposal Systems

All residents in the Town of Excelsior are served by private wells (note: there are currently no service agreements with the City of Reedsburg/Village of Rock Springs/North Freedom). Sauk County recently worked with the Wisconsin Geological Survey office on a groundwater study. The study includes information pertaining to volumes and quality as well as typical movement patterns, wellhead protection areas, and contamination issues. According to information obtained from Wisconsin and neighboring states, a low probability of significant groundwater pollution from private on-site sewage treatment systems occurs in housing developments with a density less than one house per two acres. There is a high probability of groundwater pollution where homes are located at a density greater than one house per acre. Given the soil types in the region and the mix of agricultural fields with forested areas and a low-density development pattern, groundwater contamination is assumed to be at a minimum. Exceptions include the densely developed area around Lake Virginia, which may exhibit impacts from private septic systems, and some lands adjacent to the Sauk County Landfill, which has been subject to scrutiny regarding groundwater contamination.

Overall, the disposal of domestic wastewater in the Town is handled through the use of individual Private On-Site Wastewater Treatment Systems (POWTS), or septic systems, which generally collect solids in a septic tank and discharge gray water to a drain field. Based on the requirements set forth by the State of Wisconsin COMM 83 and in Sauk County, all residential units with running water and plumbing fixtures must have an approved means of wastewater disposal. Because the Town of Excelsior is not served by a sanitary sewer system, the only current means of service is via POWTSs.

The Wisconsin Department of Commerce, in conjunction with the Sauk County Department of Planning & Zoning, regulates the siting, design, installation, and inspection of all POWTS systems in the Town of Excelsior. In 2000, the State adopted a revised private sewage system Code commonly referred to as Comm. 83. This new requirement permits the continued use of conventional systems as well as alternative systems, such as those that employ the use of biological or aerate treatment. It also stipulates system inspections every three years to ensure compliance with installation and operation requirements.

Typically, these alternative systems permit development of land areas that previously would not support a conventional system. A comparison of lands that previously could not support a POWTS under conventional technologies to those that can support alternative systems is illustrated in **Map 6-1 Septic Suitability** and **Map 6-2 Alternative Septic Suitability**. In early 2003, Sauk County revised its Private Sewage System Ordinance to allow the use of alternative systems.

As a general explanation, **Map 6-1 Septic Suitability** shows soil suitability for conventional POWTS in the Town of Excelsior. The suitability classifications, ranging from very low to high suitability, are determined based on information obtained from the Sauk County Land Conservation Department's Land Evaluation System, as monitored by the NRCS office. These classifications are based on average slope, depth to soil saturation, average depth to bedrock, and flooding potential. As a general observation, soils that fall within or near the category of most suitable are best suited for conventional POWTS. Soils that fall within or near the category of least suitable may be candidates for alternative POWTS, or may not be structured to support any POWTS.

Caution should be advised that while areas of sandy soils most commonly appear to be most suitable for POWTS, there is a danger of groundwater contamination with nitrates and bacteria, particularly

when a cluster of homes are proposed and wells are placed down groundwater flow from POWTS. Additionally, POWTS are not well suited in areas of shallow soils with bedrock that is close to the surface. Although new septic technologies can now facilitate the installation of septic systems in these shallow soils areas, these septic systems also pose a greater potential threat of groundwater contamination, especially in highly developed areas.

Excelsior does have areas of sandy soils and of shallow soils close to bedrock. Private septic systems in areas of sandy and/or shallow soils may threaten surface water quality. In terms of lake development in areas of shallow soils, leachate from septic drainfields may not percolate through the soil as is intended, instead encountering an impermeable layer (i.e., bedrock) and traveling laterally to enter the lake. Whether this is an actual threat to the surface waters in Excelsior is unknown at this time, however preventative measures can be taken with the installation of new systems and replacement of failed systems. Systems should be sited as far from the water resource as possible. Shared septic systems must be sited in an area having suitable soils, and require verification that a new technology septic system will in fact adequately treat wastewater. These types of evaluations and any regulations guiding the placement of septic systems are best handled by a Lake Association and adopted in a revised set of bylaws/covenants.

## **6.2 Solid Waste Disposal/Recycling**

Solid waste disposal sites, or landfills, are potential sources of groundwater pollution in Sauk County. In 2000, the Sauk County Department of Planning & Zoning conducted an inventory to verify the number of active and inactive or abandoned landfill sites. According to that process, it was determined that Sauk County has 15 active landfill sites throughout the County, including sites for brush disposal. In addition, more than 40 sites were identified as abandoned sites. One of those 40 sites, the old Sauk County Landfill, is located in the Town of Excelsior in sections 14 and 15. Groundwater contamination has been detected at this site, but currently no active remediation program is in place. Future uses for the Landfill site are being discussed between Sauk County and the Town of Excelsior.

Currently, the Town of Excelsior contracts with Town & Country Sanitation, which provides solid waste and recycling services for Town residents. Currently, solid waste handled by Town & Country is brought to a transfer station in Lone Rock and finally to a sanitary landfill located in the Janesville area.

## **6.3 Septage Waste Disposal**

The State of Wisconsin requires that homeowners pump their septic tanks on a 3-year basis to prolong the life of a POWTS and ensure optimal efficiency and protection of groundwater. Holding tanks are pumped on a regular basis, typically bi-monthly. Disposal methods of septage vary from deposition into a licensed municipal sewage treatment plant to land spreading. Land spreading requires special permits issued by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. Part of this permitting process examines land area, soil types, and crops grown to ensure that natural resources in the area will be protected from such activity. Additionally, the permitting process ensures the protection of human health from viruses and pathogens contained in the septage.

## **6.4 Town Hall and Garage**

The Excelsior Town Hall is located at 100 E. Broadway in the Village of Rock Springs. The town owns no road maintenance or construction equipment at this time.

## **6.5 Law Enforcement**

The Sauk County Sheriff's Department serves as the primary law enforcement agency to Town residents. Patrol officers are assigned



general service areas within the county. These law enforcement services are considered adequate.

## **6.6 Emergency Services**

The Town of Excelsior is served by four emergency service districts including 153, 177, 184, and 186. District 153 includes a small eastern portion of the Town and is covered by the Lake Delton Ambulance Service. District 177 is located in the northwestern part of the Town and is covered by the Reedsburg Ambulance service. District 184 includes the far southwestern corner of the Town and is covered by the Reedsburg Ambulance Service. District 186 is located in the southeastern quarter of the town and is covered by the Baraboo Area Ambulance Service. The entire Town is within the Reedsburg Area Fire district, which contracts with the North Freedom Fire District to serve some areas in the southeastern part of the Town. Jurisdictional boundaries of these respective services can be noted on *Map 1-2 Jurisdictional Boundaries*.

## **6.7 Library**

The Town of Excelsior and surrounding communities are served by the South Central Wisconsin Library System through Sauk County. The primary library utilized by the Town is the Reedsburg Public Library located in the City of Reedsburg. The library hosts a collection of historic photographs of the area. The Baraboo City Library, which contains a variety of books, and the Kilbourn Library in the City of Wisconsin Dells provide literary options for the residents of Excelsior.

## **6.8 Communication, Electric Utilities and Heating Fuel**

Telephone, Internet and e-mail service is provided by Frontier and Centurylink. Wireless communication facilities are becoming increasingly popular in the area, but service is difficult due to a lack of infrastructure investment by private wireless communication companies.

Electrical power service in the Town is provided by Alliant Energy. Homes heated by natural gas comprise 13.2% of the total households in Excelsior. Heating fuel is also provided through contracts with independent fuel dealers with roughly 62.5% of residents utilizing LP/Propane, or fuel oil (12.6%). Heating fuel from wood and biomass sources includes 45 households or 8.5% of the town's residents. The remaining households utilize electricity (2.4%).

## **6.9 Medical Facilities**

The Town of Excelsior is primarily served by four medical facilities including the Reedsburg Area Medical Center located at 2000 North Dewey Avenue which provides a modern facility with 53 acute care beds, 50 long-term care beds, and eight day care surgery beds. The Emergency Department at the Reedsburg Medical Center is staffed 24-hours a day with specially trained emergency room physicians. St. Clare Hospital is located at 707 14th St, Baraboo, WI. The hospital has over 100 physicians on its active and consulting medical staff. St. Clare offers acute care services as well as a wide range of other services including chemical dependency treatment, mental health services for older adults, and hemodialysis.

St Joseph's Community Health Services and Hospital, located at 400 Water Avenue in Hillsboro provides range of health services including nursing home care and emergency stabilization service for a rural population of roughly 18,000 people. Hess Memorial Hospital (part of Mile Bluff Medical Center) located at 1050 Division Street in Mauston provides evening and weekend Urgent Care and 24-hour emergency care. The Hess Hospital/Medical Center is the only hospital located in Juneau County and provides service to roughly 55,000 people.

## **6.10 Educational Facilities**

### ☐ **Primary Educational Facilities**

The Town of Excelsior is divided into two public school districts. The Reedsburg School District incorporates the western and northern two-thirds of the Town while the Baraboo School District includes the southeastern part of the Town. **Map 1-2 Jurisdictional Boundaries** shows the exact location of these boundaries. While the majority of school aged children attend one of the two districts, parochial schools also offer a schooling option as well as increasing involvement in home schooling opportunities.

- **Reedsburg School District**

The Reedsburg School District has located most of its schools in the City of Reedsburg. The Reedsburg High School located at 1100 S. Albert Avenue, Webb Middle School located at 707 N. Webb Avenue; Pineview Elementary School located at 1121 8<sup>th</sup> Street; South Elementary School located at 420 Plum Avenue; Westside Elementary School located at 401 Alexander Avenue; Ironton/La Valle Elementary School at 109 River Street in the Village of La Valle. The public schools in this district serve approximately 2,500 students in grades K-12.

According to Reedsburg School Administration, due to the construction of the new high school and the addition to Westside Elementary School, the school system has no current overcrowding issues. South Elementary School remains the oldest structure in the district, but will remain in use for the foreseeable future.

- **Baraboo School District**

The Baraboo School District is located at 101 Second Avenue in the City of Baraboo. The district has four K-5 elementary schools, one kindergarten center, one K-1 charter school, one middle school and one high school. Baraboo High School is located on 1201 Draper Street, Baraboo, and has just over 1,000 students. The Young Middle School is located on 1531 Draper Street in Baraboo, and has approximately 700 students. Three of the elementary schools are located in Baraboo, and one is in the Village of North Freedom.

- **Parochial Schools**

Sacred Heart Catholic School, located at North Oak Street; and St Peter's Lutheran School, at 346 N. Locust Street, are two private schools located in the City of Reedsburg. St. John's Lutheran School, located in Baraboo is affiliated with the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod. St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran School is located in Wonewoc. St. Joseph's Catholic School is at 310 2<sup>nd</sup> Street in Baraboo. Pine View Seventh-Day Adventist Elementary is located at 754 Gulch Avenue in Wisconsin Dells.

- **Secondary Educational Facilities**

The Town of Excelsior is within commuting distance of two two-year year college campuses including:

**UW-Baraboo/Sauk County and UW-Richland Center/Richland County** offer freshman/sophomore-level university instruction leading to an Associate of Arts degree. After building an academic foundation at UW-Baraboo/Sauk County, students can continue their work towards a bachelor's degree at a UW campus or other school of their choice. UW-Baraboo has a continuing education program that offers a variety of non-credit seminars, workshops and short courses. The programs range from computer applications and communication to theater and art field trips.

**Madison Area Technical College / Reedsburg** has over 4,000 students served annually. MATC Reedsburg provides technical and workplace skills training. The college awards associate degrees, technical diplomas, certificates and apprenticeships, and offers classes that transfer to four-year degree programs. Programs are offered in accounting, administrative assistance, business mid-management, business software application, childcare education, farm and production management,

nursing and supervisory management. The college offers apprenticeships in electrical and machine maintenance, and tool and die. MATC also offers customized labor training for local businesses.

- **Childcare Facilities**

There are no commercial childcare facilities located in the Town of Excelsior. Formal childcare is available in nearby communities such as the Village of North Freedom, the City of Reedsburg, the City of Baraboo, the City of Wisconsin Dells, and the Village of Lake Delton. Informal care may be available locally with neighbors, family, and friends.

### **6.11 Recreational Facilities**

There is a portion of Mirror Lake State Park within the Town of Excelsior, located in the northeast corner of the Town just off Highway 23. The park contains a boat landing, a fishing pier, playground, beach, and picnic area in the Town of Delton. It also has handicapped-accessible restrooms, trails, and camping available. The Baraboo River flows through the southwestern quarter of the Town of Excelsior and the Village of Rock Springs. There are numerous river access points. The Baraboo River, the longest restored free-flowing river in the Midwest, is a well-known canoe trail. The Village of Rock Springs maintains Wiedman Park on State Highway 154 west of the Village.

### **6.12 Cemeteries and Churches**

(locations of each are identified on *Map6-3 Community and Cultural Resources*)

### **6.13 Historical and Cultural Structures and Areas** (locations of each are identified on *Map 6-3 Community and Cultural Resources*)

#### ☐ **Historic Schools**

- **Jopp School** was originally a log schoolhouse on the S.J. Jopp farm. School was first taught there in 1854. The log building was replaced by a frame building on the same property in 1873. In 1942 the school district was consolidated with another, and then in 1960 the school closed when the district joined the Baraboo schools.
- **Pleasant Valley School** was originally located in section 25 when it started out in the 1850's, but moved to section 26 as shown on an 1877 map. In 1883 a new schoolhouse was built, as well as in 1934. The school closed in 1955, and was remodeled into a private home. Following the closing, students were sent to North Freedom.
- **Oak Grove School** opened in the 1850's near the center of section 35 on Highway 136. In 1894 a new building was constructed. In 1951 the school closed and students were sent to North Freedom. The old schoolhouse is now a private home.
- **Metcalf School** has a brief history. The school opened somewhere between 1861 and 1877, and was closed already in the 1880's. Students were sent to Excelsior School and Montgomery School. Originally the schoolhouse was located in the northeast quarter of section 8. The school was used as a church and eventually moved to the corner of Highway 33 and Chapel road. The old schoolhouse was torn down and replaced by a new church known as Excelsior Chapel.
- **Excelsior School** was originally known as Red School when it was put up in 1855. It was located in the northeast quarter of section 17. In 1877 the school was relocated to the west central region of section 17. In 1914 the schoolhouse was replaced with a modern building made of concrete. The school closed in 1962 and the area was added to the Reedsburg School District. The schoolhouse was remodeled for residential purposes.

- **Butterfield School** was built in 1862 on the corner of Highway 23 and Coon Bluff Road in section 2. In 1960 students were sent to the Reedsburg School District, and the school was converted to a private home.
- **Montgomery School** dates back to 1857, and was located in the northwest quarter of section 5 on Briar Bluff Road. The school was closed during the 1949-1952 terms and again for the 1953-1954 terms due to low attendance. It finally closed for good in 1955. The school building was sold to a farmer in a different location who uses it as a garage.
- **Rock Springs/ Ableman School** was originally a log cabin built in the mid 1850's. In 1871 a new schoolhouse was built on the corner of River and Maple Streets. In 1974 another new school was built. The school is located at 306 Elm Street in Rock Springs and is part of the Reedsburg School District.

#### Other Historic Structures or Areas

- **Van Hise Rock** is listed on the National Register of Historic places. It played a key role in the history of geology as Charles Van Hise used this remnant to interpret the major structural features of the metamorphosed Precambrian rocks of the entire Wisconsin River Valley, or Baraboo District. It has long served and continues to serve as a hands-on field laboratory for professional geologists and students.
- **Ableman's Gorge:** The Upper Narrows of the Baraboo River, sometimes called Ableman's Gorge, is a State Natural Area and one of the classic geological field localities in Wisconsin if not the entire world. It is a classic gorge cut by the Baraboo River through Baraboo quartzite, Cambrian sandstone, and conglomerate. The cliffs and rocky slopes rise about 200 feet above the river to form a wall nearly three-fourths of a mile long. The latter portion is 250-450 feet wide and is composed of irregular quartzite cliffs. Spectacular unconformable contacts with younger Cambrian sandstone can be seen on both the north and south sides of the Precambrian Baraboo quartzite. The exposures of the unconformity between the ancient quartzite and the overlying sandstone are world famous.
- **Pioneer Log Village Museum** is a series of historic log buildings owned by the Reedsburg Area Historical Society. This is located on the north side of Highway 33 just west of Northwoods Drive.



#### 6.14 Historical and Cultural Programs and Resources

- **Sauk County Historical Society** protects and maintains the history of the county by collecting and preserving historic artifacts, photographs and documents. The Historical Society has many community outreach programs, acts as a resource and research facility for local history and assists other Sauk County historical societies in pursuing their goals.
- **Sauk County Arts, Humanities and Historic Preservation Committee** provides funding through grant programs to community organizations and local governments seeking supplementary funds for local arts and history projects.
- **State of Wisconsin Historic Preservation Programs** provide several opportunities for cost sharing through grant and subgrant programs, through the Wisconsin Historical Society. These programs are dependent on variable annual funding sources.
- **Historic Preservation Subgrants** are available to governments and non-profit organizations for surveys to identify and evaluate historical, architectural and archaeological resources. These properties and districts can then be nominated to the National Register of Historic Places.
- **Historic Preservation Tax Credit for Income-Producing Historic Buildings** is available to those who apply for and receive project approval before beginning physical work on the rehabilitation of historic buildings.
- **Historic Homeowner's Tax Credits** are available to those who apply for and receive project approval before beginning work on rehabilitating non-income personal residences.
- **Archaeological Sites Property Tax Exemption Program** provides tax exemption for owners of archaeological sites listed in the National or State Register of Historic places.
- **Jeffris Family Foundation** provides funding for bricks and mortar rehabilitation projects in Wisconsin's smaller communities.
- **Save America's Treasures** is a federal grant program for governments and non-profit organizations.

#### **6.15 Utilities and Community Resources Goal, Objectives and Policies**

##### **Utilities and Community Resources Goal:**

Maintain and enhance utilities, facilities, services, and community resources.

##### **Utilities and Community Resources Objectives and Policies:**

UCRO-1 Encourage the maintenance and improvement of the utility infrastructure.

UCRO-2 Encourage energy conservation and use of renewable energy.

UCRO-3 Protect archeological and historic structures and the overall rural character of the Town.

UCRO-4 Provide for the proper disposal and recycling of solid waste.

UCRO-5 Maintain service in a safe and efficient manner.